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EdReach Newsletter - Week of November 30, 2007

Future Scholar holiday campaign launched

State Treasurer Converse Chellis and Superintendent of Education Jim Rex have kicked off the "Give the Gift of Education" campaign for the holiday season to encourage planned saving for college tuition. To read more, visit:
<http://www.ed.sc.gov/news/more.cfm?articleID=872>

Six Title I schools to be honored for superior achievement

Six Title I public schools in South Carolina are being recognized for superior student achievement. Two schools are receiving \$100,000 grant awards, while four qualify for awards of \$25,000 each. To read more, visit:
<http://www.ed.sc.gov/news/more.cfm?articleID=869>

Service-Learning nominations being accepted

Nominations are now being accepted for the South Carolina Commission on National and Community Service and State Farm(R) Service-Learning awards. The awards recognize students and schools that have demonstrated a commitment to community service tied to academics. To read more, visit: <http://www.ed.sc.gov/news/more.cfm?articleID=873>

Message from Jim Rex

Dear Friends,

During the past few months, I have gained valuable insights from my conversations with parents, students, educators, and citizens in communities across the Palmetto State. We've talked about concerns and shared ideas on how we can move our schools forward in the years to come. One topic I continue to highlight is the Personal Pathways to Success program, created by the Education and Economic Development Act of 2005.

Few other states are addressing the challenges associated with preparing students to work in a global economy as comprehensively as we are. South Carolina's legislation integrates career exploration and preparation activities into the academic coursework of all students.

After just one full year of implementation, Personal Pathways to Success is showing remarkable promise.

Personal Pathways to Success lets students explore and prepare for career opportunities through more relevant lessons and firsthand experience, giving them reasons to stay in school. School districts organize courses around sixteen clusters of study based on the U.S. Department of Education model. Each district is required to offer a minimum of three clusters.

I am pleased to report that in a survey conducted last month, 101 high schools reported offering at least 10 of the 16 clusters, and the remaining 81 schools reported offering between three and nine clusters. This reflects a strong commitment on the local level to help our students succeed.

Our young people are connected to the business community through twelve Regional Education Centers that are being established across the state. At these centers, students will find a variety of career and employment options, including opportunities for internships, apprenticeships, job shadowing, and other on-the-job learning.

Another critical component of Personal Pathways to Success is the Individual Graduation Plan (IGP). Beginning in the eighth grade, students work with guidance professionals and their parents to complete an IGP. They choose courses around a cluster of study and begin to explore different careers. The IGP is a forum for ongoing dialogue and collaboration between students, parents, and educators.

In the past year, of the state's more than 50,000 eighth graders, 84 percent completed an IGP. Among those, 74 percent were accompanied by a parent. Those numbers represent real students spending real time focused on their futures--often for the first time. We've heard from many parents who were encouraged by the fact that they were invited to talk about something positive with their children.

Finally, Personal Pathways to Success provides critical support to at-risk students. Today, every high school in South Carolina has either begun or identified a program to serve students at risk of dropping out. Those programs include High Schools That Work, Jobs for South Carolina Graduates, and Star Academies. Early results are encouraging.

For example, 88 percent of students attending a Star Academy in Pickens County did not drop out, and 76 percent moved on to the 10th grade. In Anderson School District 5, 90 percent of the Star Academy students completed enough credits to enroll in the local career and technology center which graduates 100 percent of the students who enter the tenth grade.

Personal Pathways to Success is a work in progress, and there is much more to be done. I hope you will take the time to learn about this important effort and find out how you can become involved. Together we'll help our students--and our economy--move in the right direction.

Sincerely,

Jim Rex
State Superintendent of Education

To read more about the Personal Pathways to Success Program, visit:

<http://www.scpathways.org>

To become involved, email: ambassador@scpathways.org

Rex on The Road:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/superintendent/Rex-on-The-Road-Schedule.html>

In The News:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/news/>

On The Air:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/publicinformation/On-The-Air.html>

Dates to Remember:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/publicinformation/Dates-to-Remember.html>

Resources for Teachers:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/publicinformation/Resources-for-Teachers.html>

Resources for Students:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/publicinformation/Resources-for-Students.html>

Resources for Administrators:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/publicinformation/Resources-for-School-Administrators.html>

What Others Are Saying:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/publicinformation/Education-RelatedEditorialOpinion.html>

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1429 Senate Street, Columbia, SC 29201

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